

## The Stage and Its People



John Drew  
and Mrs. Leslie Carter in  
"The Circle" UNITE STUDIO

## The Theaters

By Percy Hammond

ALMOST the only things that perplex the onlooker at Mr. Walter's "The Easiest Way" are the odd ethics of the two men who are in conflict for the life and person of the hapless heroine. Mr. Kilgour's satanic broker, for instance, does not deny that his business manners border on the unholy; that he is a ruthless fellow of no fastidious financial ideals, and that he believes in getting the money, no matter how noxious the method. In his relations with women he is a cold and selfish satyr. He has his generous moments, of course, as the most successful of us have; but he is a bandit, born and bred, and his depredations, whether pecuniary or of the flesh, suggest no delicate nuances of honor. I trust I do not wrong this broker in the foregoing inventory of his demerits.

Yet, when a young Colorado journalist deprives him of Laura Murdock, his comely paramour, planning to make her, eventually, a good woman by marriage, the broker produces a surprising code of conduct. Though the youthful press-man hates him and has threatened him with dreams, he does not seem to care. Instead of being embittered at his loss, he promises the successful adversary that in the probable event of Miss Murdock's return to the sheltering shames of concubinage, he will apprise him of her lapse. And after he has made the easiest way the only way for her to go, he forces her to write to her betrothed and tell him that she has again become a thrall of pleasure and the crimson comforts.

Later, when the tardy mountaineer arrives in New York to take Miss Murdock back to the mines, the stocks-and-bonds man insists that his compact must be kept. He will not, he shouts, be made a liar to his fellow man. The future happiness of Miss Murdock, of her honest fiancé, of him himself, are as nothing to his wild passion for telling the truth. Aware, as you are, of his spidery propensities, you wonder why he thus demands for himself and the others the penalties of honesty. It is not that he desires to humiliate his opponent, for he likes the boy and wishes him well. Since the creed of his behavior is a flexible one, he would naturally forget his promise and discommode nobody. His actions, perhaps, are suggested by the eccentric noddus which exists, they say, in all of us, a sort of trouble-complex. That explanation, however, does not excuse the department of Miss Murdock's forthright argonaut from the Rockies. So fine a youth as he is said to be by Mr. Walter would never, you think, intrust his imperiled lady-love to New York City while he searched for his fortune. Still less would he be so cruel at the news of her surrender to circumstance.

All of which is futile speculation. Mr. Belasco's admirable revival of "The Easiest Way" shows that even after twelve years our sins and our manner of performing them are not much changed. Those of us who are unworthy brokers are still misbehaving much as we did in 1909, and our victims, the pretty ladies, pay and pay, as they paid in those ancient days. Miss Starr, impersonating the unfortunate Murdock girl, is a truer actress than she was twelve years ago, I think; and she is so appealing these nights at the Lyceum that I hope she does as well at the Montmartre, where she goes now, as she did at Rector's, where she went then.

Miss Laura Walker is still the handsome, vigorous and candid mercenary that she used to be, and Mr. Kilgour is again complete as the honest flesh-brigand.

"SWORDS," which at its first performance seemed to lack the dramatic viscera essential to long existence in the theater, has been provided, it is said, with some new innards, and is now more sturdy and competent. The newspaper advertisements tell of increasing curtain calls at the end of the acts, and say that audiences remain after the play is over, applauding and reluctant to go to their homes. This is glad tidings, for "Swords" was, even at its irresolute beginning, so fine a thing that we all felt sorry because of the suspected absence from it of a steady determination, an impetus and a sweep.

It appeared then to be a gloomy though melodious ritual, following a somewhat sanctimonious pattern of poetic drama, too proud to employ the persuasive punch of commerce. Now that it has been slightly amended, as it is said, nearer to our heart's desire it should be a pleasing thing to see and to hear. The cloistral Miss Clare Eames is to be observed in "Swords" as a distressed hostage in a lustful and ferocious Italian court. She sounds the melancholy bells of imperiled female probity distinctly, though from a remote distance, and if when her music reaches you it is but a tinkle, it is also clear, precise and accurate. Concerning the verse of Mr. Sidney Howard, the young Harvard Man who wrote "Swords," it is surmised by one who knows but little of such things that it has imagination, cadence and harmony.

In the utterance of Mr. Howard's scenic song I liked Mr. José Ruben best. Mr. Ruben sometimes is one of those "finished" actors who carve their rôles minutely and who polish them until they glisten under a thoughtful and scrupulous surface. To Mr. Ruben, as the passionate, masterful jongleur and major domo of the castle, fall many of Mr. Howard's most luscious remarks. Since Mr. Ruben has a Latin grace, a sense of rhythm, an appealing voice and, what is of less importance to the poetic drama, intelligence and an education, he is well disposed in the attitudes and elocutions of his picturesque rôle. From a bit of his caveman lovmaking to the beautiful Fiamma you may decide for yourself whether or not "Swords" is poetry or rhetoric:

Magnificent . . . Yet, for all and always, I, Madonna Fiamma, I have broken you . . . In all the world I am your single peer, Chosen of fate to teach you discipline . . . I have decided, Fiamma, presently I shall go out together, to some hill, Where distant lutes are clear and night birds sing Carols like flakes of starlight drifting down. I know this, Fiamma, nor will you gainsay My will in any wise. This love of mine, Born in betrayal of my master's trust,



Lydia Lipkowska in the new  
"Merry Widow" Hat



Chrystal Herne in  
"The Alton Case" REAL NILES STUDIO



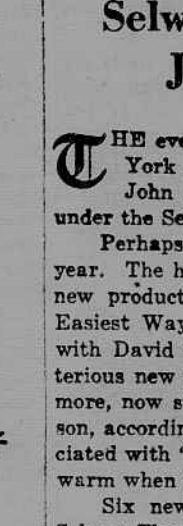
Frances Carson in  
"The Blue Lagoon" REAL NILES STUDIO



Arthur Sinclair in  
"The White Headed Boy" PHOTO REVILLE STUDIO



Sue MacMan in  
"True to Form" Pedro de Cordoba in "Launcelot and Elaine" PHOTO BY ABBE



Pedro de Cordoba in  
"Launcelot and Elaine" PHOTO BY ABBE

## New Plays

Six Openings Scheduled This Week; Selwyns Present Mrs. Carter and John Drew in "The Circle"

THE event of the week in the theater will be the return to the New York stage, after fifteen years, of Mrs. Leslie Carter, assisted by John Drew, in "The Circle," Somerset Maugham's satirical play, under the Selwyn management.

Perhaps the apparition of the visiting star will be the event of the year. The heat of excitement may wax and wane about Colonel Savage's new production of "The Merry Widow"; the Belasco revivals of "The Easiest Way," with Frances Starr, and "The Return of Peter Grimm," with David Warfield; Otis Skinner in "Blood and Sand," and the mysterious new play which Arthur Hopkins holds in escrow for John Barrymore, now straying on some distant shore. But the glamour of the season, according to available data, shall linger about the figure that is associated with "Du Barry," "Adrea" and "Zaza" and the triumphs that were warm when these old plays were new.

Six new productions are offered this week—"The Circle," at the Selwyn Theater; "Launcelot and Elaine," at the Greenwich Village; "True to Form," at the Bramhall Playhouse; "Only 38," at the Cort; "The Blue Lagoon," at the Astor, and "The White Headed Boy," at Henry Miller's Theater.

For the next week are promised on September 19 Ina Claire, in "Bluebeard's Eighth Wife," at the Ritz; on September 20, Otis Skinner, in "Blood and Sand," at the Empire and John Meehan's production, "The Man in the Making," at the Hudson; on September 21, David Warfield, in "The Return of Peter Grimm," at the Belasco, and the Provincetown Players' production of "Spring," at the Princess.

Three Openings for To-morrow Night

At the Selwyn Theater to-morrow evening the Selwyns will present Somerset Maugham's "The Circle," with an all-star cast headed by Mrs. Leslie Carter and John Drew. In this satirical comedy Mr. Maugham introduces two cases of the eternal triangle and proves once more the old-established fact that no young couple will ever profit by the experience of older ones. As Lady Kitty and Lord Porteus, the pair of elderly lovers who furnish the example which is not heeded, Mrs. Carter and Mr. Drew have most delightfully human characters for the employment of the skill and artistic finish for which each of these favorites is so well known.

"Launcelot and Elaine," Edwin Milton Royle's romantic drama of the time of King Arthur and the Round Table, will be offered for the first time to-morrow night at the Greenwich Village Theater. The play is in four acts and a prologue, with the scenes laid in the courtyard of the castle of Astolat and the garden of Queen Guinevere. Mr. Royle has taken for his central theme the struggle in the soul of Launcelot between his human love for the Queen and his spiritual love for Elaine. Through the courtesy of Leo Shubert, Edward Elmer has staged the piece. The production and costumes are by Livingston Platt, with incidental music by W. Franke Harling.

Actors' Repertory Theater Begins Its Season

The first offering of the season of the Actors' Repertory Theater, of which Barry Maccollum is director, will have its premiere at the Bramhall Playhouse to-morrow night. The play is "True to Form," a comedy of modern American life by Augustine McHugh, who has a record of Broadway successes in "The Meanest Man in the World" and "Officer 666." The production has been made under the personal direction of the author.

On Tuesday evening Sam Harris will present at the Cort Theater "Only 38," by A. E. Thomas. The play has been staged by Sam Forrest.

"The Blue Lagoon," a dramatization of Stappole's novel, will be produced by the Shuberts at the Astor Theater on Wednesday evening, under the direction of Captain Basil Dean, who made the London production of the piece last year. The adaptation of the story of the two children and the Irish sailor who are stranded on an uninhabited island in the South Seas has been done by Norman MacOwen and Charlton Mann. Captain Dean has made the most of the thrilling episodes of the book, such as the fire at sea and the tornado, as well as of the spectacular beauty of the locale. Incidental music has been composed by Clive Carey, and a special orchestra will be conducted by Max Steiner.

Basil Dean to Stage "The Blue Lagoon" Basil Dean, the English producing manager, who has come to New York to stage "The Blue Lagoon," has established himself in London as a most successful producer. Under the name of Readean, a combination of his own name and that of his financial backer, Mr. Rea, he has presented three plays—Galsworthy's "The Skin Game," at St. Martin's Theater; "The Blue Lagoon" at the Prince of Wales, and "A Bill of Divorcement" (now running at St. Martin's), which have proved artistic successes as well as box office hits. Previous to this Mr. Dean had established a repertoire company in Liverpool, producing Shakespearean plays and such Continental dramas as "Hannibal." The Readean company has now obtained control of St. Martin's Theater and of the Aldwych, in London, where it is proposed to present a biographical play based upon the life of Shakespeare. Last season Mr. Dean staged the American production of "The Skin Game" at the Bijou Theater.

Sunday Concerts Resumed Sunday concerts will be resumed at the Columbia Theater to-day. As in past seasons they will be presented by Fieber & Shea. There will be a reduction of 30 per cent in the price of seats for the Sunday night shows, the scale running from 75 cents to \$1.35.

## News and Gossip of the Stage

Provincetown Players to Keep Laboratory in Old Macdougall Street Stand

ALTHOUGH the Provincetown Players have taken over the Princess Theater for the coming year and announce a second season of Provincetown plays, they will keep their playhouse on Macdougall Street as it has always been, an "experimental stage," and the playwrights' theater, where American playwrights may see their plays in action and superintend their own productions without interference and with all the resources of the Players' Theater turned over to the man (or woman) of the hour. At the beginning of their eighth season they are more than ever pledged to the experimental stage as their best offering to the dramatist. But with the Princess for a supplementary theater they can now offer more. Bound as they are to their subscribers for the production of a certain number of plays each season, they have often had to withdraw a play to make room for the next bill. This year they will present at the Princess past successes and new ones, as their playhouse on Macdougall Street finds and releases them in the course of the season. The opening bill for the Princess will be "The Spring," by George Cram Cook, which had a successful run last winter at the Macdougall Street Theater.

Leon Errol, the comedian star of "Sally," is the latest acquisition to the inner circle of the "Square Club," an organization composed exclusively of members of the theatrical profession having Masonic affiliations. Mr. Errol is a Mystic Shriner of Mecca Temple and a thirty-second degree Mason, who first found himself astride the traditional "goat" in his native Australia many years ago. Mr. Errol is also to be the guest of honor at the

Evened by remorse, In its incredible ascendancy, is utterly invincible. Said I not so? Oh, now, your flesh is flame, your blood is molten gold, your bones are nothing . . .

[He has snatched the sword and holds it hilt toward her, the point against his heart.]

But one blow . . . one blow Upon the hilt. Strike! Strike . . . Ah . . . Now have you learned . . . There is Nothing, Madonna, so invincible As evil . . . Ah . . .

The most fun I had last week in six days of breathless playgoing was at the theater of Miss Maxine Elliott, where Mr. Faversham renewed his youth in Cosmo Hamilton's "The Silver Fox." The wisecracks tell me that this comedy is too smart to be permanent; that it is one of those brilliant ephemera which last but a day and are a little fly. Its glib elegances of speech and characterization are, they say, a trifle above and beyond the routine taste. In the event of its failure to please this busy neighborhood I hope that Mr. Shubert will not grow weary of good deeds. "The Silver Fox" is, at any rate, sufficiently urbane and sophisticated to be entertainment for those who exist beside the open roads, and if it does not do well here it will do well there. I'll risk a brown derby that "The Silver Fox" will fascinate the drama's patrons in Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul, to say nothing of those in Pittsburgh, Columbus, Cincinnati, St. Louis and points West.

## New Theatrical Offerings

MONDAY—At the Selwyn Theater the Selwyns will present Mrs. Leslie Carter and John Drew in "The Circle," by Somerset Maugham. The supporting cast: Estelle Winwood, Ernest Lawford, John Halliday and Robert Rendel.

At the Greenwich Village Theater Edwin Milton Royle will present "Launcelot and Elaine." The cast: Pedro de Cordoba, Selena and Josephine Royle, Elsie Emond, Margaret Fareleigh, Martha Messinger, Francesca di Stint, Leo Leonard, Gerald Rogers, Lugarda Harling, Charles Harbury, J. Arthur Young, Walter Lawrence, Bertram Marburgh and H. B. Dee.

At the Bramhall Playhouse the Actors' Repertory Theater will offer "True to Form," a comedy by Augustin MacHugh. The cast: Edwin Nicander, Sue MacMan, Eugene Blair, Verna Wilkins, John Warner, George Graham and Desmond Gallagher.

TUESDAY—At the Cort Theater Sam H. Harris will present "Only 38," a comedy by A. E. Thomas. The cast: Mary Ryan, Harry C. Browne, Percy Pollock, Kate Mayhew, Helen Van House, Neil Martin, Ruth Nero, Margaret Shackelford and Leo Cunningham.

WEDNESDAY—At the Astor Theater the Shuberts will produce a spectacular drama entitled "The Blue Lagoon." The cast: Harold French, Frances Carson, Cecil Yapp, Andrew Lawlor, Lorna Volare, Edmund Gurney, Harry Plimmer, David Glassford, Selma Hall, Henry Morrell, Carlton A. Rivers, Galenby Bell and Edward Robson.

THURSDAY—At Henry Miller's Theater Charles Dillingham will present "The Whiteheaded Boy," by Lennox Robinson. The cast: Marie O'Neill, Arthur Sinclair, Sydney Morgan, John O'Rourke, Harry Hutchinson, Arthur Shields, Maureen Delaney, Nora Desmond, Eugene McKernan, Marie Slade, Gertrude Murphy and Christine Hayden.

annual celebration of the "Gavel Club," to be held shortly.

Manuel Penella, the Spanish composer of "El Gato Montes" ("The Wild Cat"), is due to arrive this week from Barcelona, bringing with him all the costumes and scenery for his New York production of the piece, which he expects to present some time in October. "El Gato Montes" will be sung in English with an American cast, and it will be the first time that a purely Spanish opera has been given in this country.

The Brooklyn Institute Players will give for their first play of the season "The Foundations," by Galsworthy, which will be presented in the Academy of Music October 6, 7 and 8. This will be the first production of the play in this country.

A series of four Irish plays is the feature at the Fourteenth Street Theater this month, with Andrew Mack, the Irish actor and singer, heading the casts. Each play runs a week, "Jack Shannon" being the current attraction offered.

Helen Lackaye and Charles Hammond, who have become associated with The People's Players, Inc., will have prominent rôles in "As Ye Mould," a modern American drama by Charles Mackey, which will be the first of six plays to be presented in the Fifteenth

David Warfield Returns in Belasco Offering of 'Peter Grimm' Sept. 21

Street Theater this season under the direction of Geoffrey Stein. "As Ye Mould" will open October 19.

The Original Rialto Orchestra of fifty soloists has taken over the Manhattan Opera House, where programs that will delight all music lovers will be given twice daily. In addition to the music program a Thomas H. Ince photoplay will be shown. This is the first time such an organization has used the co-operative plan in providing entertainment of this nature.

To-morrow night will mark the 400th consecutive performance of "The First Year," with Frank Craven, at the Little Theater.

The new Merry Widow hat, as devised by Peggy Hoyt for Mme. Lipkowska, is at once more gorgeous, less extreme and harder to copy than the headgear popularized fourteen years ago by Ethel Jackson in this same operetta. And it isn't until the third act, in the famous Maxim's scene, that one has a chance to see Miss Hoyt's creation of pink silver cloth, softly draped with the new round crown and decorated by a halo of pink esprit, a feathery trimming which suggests the prohibited cross egret.

The reappearance of David Warfield in "The Return of Peter Grimm" is scheduled for September 21 at the Belasco Theater, where he will appear for a limited engagement of ten weeks. In this play of three acts Mr. Belasco has dramatized the borderland between the seen and the unseen. The cast in support of Mr. Warfield numbers John Sainpolis, George Wellington, Joseph Brennan, William Boag, John F. Weber, Richard Dupont, David Malcom, Marie Bates, Miriam Doyle and Marie Reichardt.

Harold French, the young English actor who has come here to play his original rôle of the castaway in the Shubert production of "The Blue Lagoon," had the unique experience during the World War of falling 5,000 feet in an airplane over London and living to tell the tale. In combating a German air raid above the city French's machine was struck by a bullet and put out of commission. He fell 5,000 feet before he was able to control it sufficiently to right it, so that he landed in a horizontal position in the tree into which he crashed. Save for one rib he suffered no broken bones, but the rapidity of the fall moved his heart an inch out of place.